

Subject: TESTIMONY RE: HB 5490- AN ACT CONCERNING THE MINIMUM BUDGET REQUIREMENT

Dear Chris,

I would very much appreciate this testimony being presented to the education committee.

Re: Bill 5490,

As First Selectman of Eastford CT I would request that you relay a few points concerning Bill 5490, and MBR in particular to the committee. Eastford is a small rural town of 1,800 persons with an annual budget of 4.8 million, 74% of which is the BOE budget. Without effecting education programs, significant swings in the BOE budget are frequent because of varying numbers of high school students attending our designated high school, Woodstock Academy in any given year, special education costs swings, and other factors. There is no leveling effect in a budget this small. The effect of the preceding without room for adjustment may easily account for 5-10% of the education budget in any given year. MBR requirements force an almost unbearable burden on the town side of the budget which must try to adjust for this, plus rising cost, plus reductions in state revenue, plus additional mandates, (judge of probate, etc.), all in only 25% of the budget. Eastford has four full time employees on the town side. The MBR requirements effect will be a basically unfunded PWs department, road program, and infrastructure.

Basically what I am trying to convey is that while I believe the original intent of not allowing an increase in ECS funding to be used to effectively lower taxes, although practically easy for disingenuous people to circumvent, was not ill intentioned. HOWEVER, IT IS FISCALLY IRRESPONSIBLE FOR THE STATE TO MANDATE EDUCATION EXPENDITURES WHILE REDUCING REVENUES, WHICH WE ALL KNOW WILL BE A FACT OF LIFE IN THE UPCOMING BUDGETS.

We CAN fairly and equitably manage our own budgets at the local level if we are simply allowed to do so.

The current mitigation language in the proposed bill is woefully narrow and almost insignificant.

PLEASE – REPEAL THE MBR REQUIREMENT IMMEDIATELY—LET US DO OUR JOBS.

A sincere thank you,

Allan E. Platt
First Selectman
Eastford, CT